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## **ENGINEERS FROM V CORPS' 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION HOST SECOND PUBLIC WORKS CONFERENCE IN IRAQ**

**1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Office release**

**LAKE DOKAN, AS SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq** -- Military members, U.S. civilians and Iraqi officials who are working to improve public works in the 1st Infantry Division's area of operations in Iraq gathered here December 12 for the second daylong conference hosted by the Engineer Brigade of V Corps' 1st Infantry Division.

The public works conference was designed to allow officials to discuss issues and offer solutions in the country's rebuilding process. Coalition and Iraqi officials involved with improving water, sewer and irrigation infrastructure within Salah Ad Din, Kirkuk, Diyala and As Sulaymaniyah provinces presented updates and shared concerns and viewpoints on public works projects and issues.

Capt. Gary Bonham, public works ministry coordinator for the brigade, said the conference was significant because it was the first time "all of the major players in the sector of public works were brought together to talk about the ongoing reconstruction activities in the public works sector."

The venue allowed Iraqis and coalition reconstruction agencies an opportunity to “discuss the best way to rebuild the water, sewer and irrigation infrastructure in Iraq.”

Iraqi ministers of Municipalities and Public Works and ministers of Water Resources were invited to attend the event, along with the deputy governors of water, sewer and irrigation from the four provinces.

Col. William Haight, commander of the brigade, told those attending the conference that much progress has been made in water, sewer and irrigation in the four provinces, but added that “not nearly enough” has been done.

Since the division began overseeing the four regions, Haight explained, \$11 million in public works projects to improve water irrigation and sewer have been undertaken, and that 25 projects worth \$17 million are in progress.

“This is a lot of activity and money,” he said.

While Haight noted that not all of the money was well spent and achieved the desired results, he said he hoped the conference would allow for an exchange of communication that would yield better ideas of what each agency does, from the Project and Contracting Office to the Army Corps of Engineers.

“Our job is to work ourselves out of a job in three years,” said Bob Quint, senior advisor for the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office of municipalities and public works.

"Iraq is a sovereign nation and thus is ultimately responsible for what gets done."

Quint said all interested agencies here must coordinate, cooperate and share resources for public works projects to be successful in Iraq.

Morgan Morehart, project manager for Washington International, Inc., agreed with Quint. Morehart's company is currently overseeing two public works projects in northern Iraq -- the Diyala weir irrigation canal structure and the Adhaim dam rehabilitation.

"Our mission in Iraq is to improve the future for future generations," he said.

The first Engineer Brigade-hosted public works conference was conducted here in September, and focused on electrical power.

